

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In step S101, an electrical signal output from an CCD is converted into a digital signal. In step S103, digital data output from an analog-to-digital converter are recorded in RAM. In step S104, the data recorded on RAM are subjected to various image correction. In steps S105 through S110, the data corrected in step S104 are compressed in accordance with a JPEG compression scheme. In step S106, there is determined a location in which characteristic data are to be embedded. In step S107, characteristic data are produced from image data. In step S108, encrypted data are formed by encrypting characteristic data. In step S109, encrypted characteristic data are embedded into image data.